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BIRTH

843 The first signs of pregnancy were received with rejoicing by the married couple and their families, who at once began preparing suitable presents for the child. During this period certain restrictions were placed upon the expectant mother and her husband. One of the most important of these prohibited the husband from killing or looking at animals other than the red deer, the flesh of which [825] only his wife was permitted to eat. If the man killed a deer, he jumped over it twice from right to left and twice from left to right, and then scattered a handful of dust over the animal; otherwise the child would be influenced by the deer. If he killed or looked at other animals, they would cause the child's appearance to be like that of an animal.

843 538 825 This restriction is illustrated by the following two tales. Once, the husband of a pregnant woman was trapping beaver and otter. One day the man killed an otter, took it home, and skinned it in the presence of his wife, so that the woman saw all that he did. When she gave birth, the child was part otter and part human, and died soon after. At another time a man went hunting during his wife's pregnancy. He found a badger, shot it through the eye, and took the skin home, showing it to his wife and relating the circumstances of how he got it. Though she tried to prevent his telling about it and tried not to see the skin, her child was born blind.

843 During pregnancy the wife was forbidden the use of any form of knife in the preparation and cutting of food, for to do so would sever the umbilical cord and cause the child to bleed to death. The husband was also careful in the care of his ponies and kept away from those that were lariated. Should he become entangled [825] in the lariat the child would be strangled or injured in the delivery. A pregnant woman refrained from drinking with a horn spoon or [915] from a small earthenware vessel which was used as a dipper, as she would drink in the sound supposed to reside in the utensil. The noise would enter the embryo's ears and the child would be born [826] deaf. In other words, practically all forms of congenital deformity 843 were ascribed to the violation of restrictions imposed during preg- 538 nancy. Even twins were supposed to owe their origin to the fact [845] that in ancient mythological times a woman seduced a man, he believing her to be a woman of whom he was very fond. When they had lain together in the timber beyond the village, she jumped up and laughed at him. In her shadow he saw her ears move and looking closer saw a deer running away. The man in vain tried to

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kill her, and after he had followed her a long distance she changed herself back into a woman. They lived together for several years. In the meantime it was thought that the man had been killed. Finally she accompanied him to his village as his wife, where she gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. They grew up and took their proper places in the village. At first the deer wife disliked living in the village and often tried to run away, but afterwards she became reconciled and gave birth to other twins. Thereafter her descendants in the female line always gave birth to twins, and from this woman are supposed to be descended all the twins ever born among the Skidi.

Finally, it may be noted that no pregnant woman could come near the ceremonial contests where the medicine-men threw their medicine "arrows" at each other. Ordinarily she might be a very powerful medicine-woman and be able to protect herself from the "arrows" of her opponents, but during this period her thought and mind were on her child and consequently she could not ward off the "arrows," which would fly to her and kill her.

On the first indication of labor the husband left the lodge and did not return to his wife for four days, as his presence during this time was thought to increase the difficulty of birth. The husband continued to observe the restrictions on his conduct, such as abstention from hunting, which were in force during the period of pregnancy. Also he unbraided his hair and wore it loose, for it was believed that Tirawa wore his hair in this manner when he was creating the universe.

With the approach of labor the wife herself selected an old woman, who was usually a medicine-woman or the keeper of a sacred bundle, to be midwife. The latter came, bringing her medicine bag and a wooden bowl in which to wash the child. Sometimes the bowl was covered with representations of a dog, goose, deer, or some other animal, so that when the child grew up it would possess the magic power of the animal depicted. On arriving at the lodge, the midwife brought in some fresh earth and spread it upon the floor. Over this she put a thick covering of soft grass. The flow of blood following delivery could thereby be absorbed by the earth and grass and the whole easily removed. Next several parfleches were piled for a head-rest, and the pregnant woman was laid in the place prepared for her.

With the beginning of labor the mother was given some medicine by the midwife and told that it would relieve her and make for an easy birth. Should the woman give birth before the arrival of

X539 *Ti-ra'-wa* made you, and takes care of you. He will look after you,
773 but I put these things about your neck to show that I have good feelings toward you. I hope that when my child is born, the *Nahu'rac* will take care of him, and see that he grows up a good man, and I hope that *Ti-ra'-wa* will take care of you and of mine." He looked at the little bear for quite a long time, and talked to it, and then he went on his way.

When he returned to the village from his warpath, he told his wife about the little bear, and how he had looked at it and talked to it.

X539 When his child was born it had all the ways of a bear. So it is
773 among the Pawnees. A woman, before her child is born, must not
843 look hard at any animal, for the child may be like it. There was a woman in the Kit-ke-hahk'-i band, who caught a rabbit, and, because it was gentle and soft, she took it up in her hands and held it before her face and petted it, and when her child was born it had a split nose, like a rabbit. This man is still alive.

X539 This boy, who was like a bear, as he grew up, had still more the
773 ways of a bear. Often he would go off by himself, and try to pray to the bear, because he felt like a bear. He used to say, in a joking way, to the other young men, that he could make himself a bear.

After he had come to be a man, he started out once on the warpath with a party of about thirty-five others. He was the leader of the party. They went away up on the Running Water, and before they had come to any village, they were discovered by Sioux. The enemy pursued them, and surrounded them, and fought with them. The Pawnees were overpowered, their enemies were so many, and all were killed.

The country where this took place is rocky, and much cedar grows there. Many bears lived there. The battle was fought in the morning; and the Pawnees were all killed in a hollow. Right after the fight, in the afternoon, two bears came traveling along by this place. When they came to the spot where the Pawnees had been killed, they found one of the bodies, and the she bear recognized it as that of the boy who was like a bear. She called to the he bear, and said, "Here is the man that was very good to us. He often sacrificed smokes to us, and every time he ate he used always to take a piece of food and give it to us, saying, 'Here is something for you to eat. Eat this.'